Newark, N. J. Nov. 25th. 1836.

Beloved Brethren.

I have had at hand for some time a few notes on my Memorandum, by way of preparation for a letter to you. It is but 14 months since I ceased to be an acting member of your Committee. If my former connection with you, & deep interest in all your proceedings taken together, constitute any claim to membership, then I am a member still. I hope to be regarded therefore, as not wandering beyond the bounds of propriety, if I address you on topics not usually the theme selected by missionaries. I do regard even your discussions, your essays, your dissertations, & particularly your correspondence as important to future foreign & missionary operations. If this were not my feeling, I would not occupy my own time, or yours in calling attention to these matters. I wish to make a few remarks upon the correspondence of your Committee in all its branches, & then if time will allow on some other topics.

To you is committed the whole business of collecting information for the Society of Inquiry, from the great missionary field. A very important part then of the Society's business is intrusted to you, & upon the manner in which your Committee discharge its duty from year to year, depends much of the interest of the whole Society, & its influence upon the cause of missions. Since I have known your Committee, the Cor. Sec. & his two assistants have managed the correspondence so entirely, that other members have known little about it, & have felt little interest in it, perhaps none, unless called upon to aid in writing letters, or when listening to letters received. May I not say, most of the members have been so unacquainted with the state of the correspondence, or the manner in which it has usually been conducted, that if asked they could have given no information. If therefore, your Secretaries should be suddenly removed the whole of this branch of your business would be exposed to utter confusion. Suffer me to propose a case of conscience. Is this state of things right? Do you do justice to your brethren or yourselves in this way? Should not every member of the Committee inform himself sufficiently in relation to this matter to be able to render aid when called upon, & to be able to judge whether the Secretaries do their duty or not? Your correspondence, in my view, is far more important than any of you probably regard it.

To the Secretaries I would suggest the propriety of making preparation to write, by collecting interesting & important facts. Carry in your pocket, brethren, a small note book, & when you meet with statements, statistics, &c. that will interest your fellow brethren, note them down, by reference or otherwise, & thus secure them for use. This plan will greatly help you, I think, & is worth trying.

From abroad you wish to obtain information. I wish to pro-

pose a plan, that I deem of some importance, & one which, if adopted, will greatly aid you in securing early & full information from many mission any Stations. The Questions in your "Register of Correspondence" are now numerous. Some of them are not important, tho' most of them are so. Let them be copied, omiting those not important, & hand the list & the Register together to Dr Alexander at least, perhaps to Bros A. & Miller also, & ask him or them to look over the list & suggest additions, & when this has been done print the whole on a letter or fools cap sheet, that a copy may be sent in letter form to every Corresponden. & I would say several to every important mission. If you accompany this circular by a copy of the Constitution of the Soc. of Inq. for those missionaries to whom it has not been already sent, I believe you would greatly facilitate this branch of your business. It would not supersede the necessity of writing, it ought not, but it would save labor, & with a brief explanation of your plan for collecting & preserving information, would help missionaries to understand you better; and also, with the list at hand, to write much more to the point than they are apt to, now. It would give me great pleasure to receive a copy of the "questions".

I regret to say, that owing to the multitude of my own occupations when with you, the correspondence was not carried on with that efficiency which is at all times desirable. Not one quarter as many letters were written as should have been; — But the laboring car was left chiefly to one member of the committee. Last year the matter was not mended. Much of this work should now be done to place this department of your labors on a proper footing. Something like 20 letters ought to be written before the 1st of February, if I may judge & speak with the freedom I have chosen. Several letters are still unanswered. Some should be written to missions with wh. you have hitherto held no correspondence. E.g. The New Zealand Missions. Why not write immediately to Dr Philip again, while he remains in Eng. asking for additional information, & then if he gives it, publish it with a 2d edition of his first? Do you know that his former letter led to the establishment of the Mission among the Zoolahs?

Your Secretary, I think, should prepare himself for writing in part by reading much of what has been already collected. The bound volume of letters contains many valuable documents, much information, in regard to the manner of writing, may also be obtained from the "Register". When one good letter is prepared, a copy with variations will answer, in most cases, as well for a second or third correspondent as an entirely new letter. The letter sent to Rev Lorin Andrews in 1832, & wh. drew from him a reply, in part of 6 sheets, was copied substantially by another hand, and sent to Rev Hollis Read of the Mahratta Mission, and from him came a reply of 3½ sheets, & full of very important information. See no. 31, Bound Volumes. These letters contained about 30 questions. If you are all willing to aid the Secretaries it will not be difficult to increase your correspondence materially within a few months. Many of your letters, if is true, will not be answered before some of you will have left the Sem. but others will

receive important information no doubt though your instrumentality.

When letters are received, let your Secretary be careful to mark the date of arrival on the letter, as well as in the Register; and when answered, let the letter be marked "answered" with the date. It is easily done & the information is worth having. This was not attended to last year.

If letters are directed to be published never send the original to the press. It may be mutilated. It may be lost. Two or three will take a copy in a short time & then the original letter is safe. I need not exhort you to imitate the example of 1834 in binding your letters when enough for a volume have accumulated; — Let them be preserved with that view.

I come now to your Register —

It was designed to contain First a list of the principal American Missionaries with a few facts from their history attached. The order is the date of leaving this country. The facts for this list may be obtained from the Hist. of Missions 2 vols. Duane in the Town Lib. — The Andover Memoir of Am. Miss^rs The Miss. Herald; the Baptist Magazine &c. & vols. of documents at the Miss^y Rooms & composed of questions to Missionaries on these points & their answers.

I would say always preserve a synopsis of the contents of the letters you send away. The reason will be obvious. A full copy you do not need. It would be drudgery to make one of every letter.

Let your list of letters Rec^d be correct.

Of the Questions I have already spoken. Brethren, do print them or better ones. I think you will not regret it.

The extracts, it may be well to mention, contain very much valuable information arranged in the form of replies to the questions. Every member of the committee, yes, & of the Society too, who feels any interest in foreign Missions will be well repaid for his trouble in reading them over. But by all means brethren, Keep the book clean. Leave not on its pages the prints of fingers or of your Lamps. Pardon the suggestion for I do love neatness. These questions & extracts have cost some of your predecessors many hours, days & weeks of labor. I have myself spent more than one entire week in copying extracts since the 1st of September last.

If your influence on the Society of Inquiry permit me to speak. You do exert an influence by your reports. Need I suggest, that these ought always to be carefully prepared, not the result of hasty reading on the 1st day of the month?

But the letters you receive are also read to the Society. True, you do not always have letters from abroad, but can you not try to have them; and when none are received may not some substitute be found, so that your Cor. Sec. shall always be able to read something that will interest? Why not sometimes direct him to read part of an old letter, an appeal, for instance, on the subject of duty to the heathen, from among those thrilling ones already in your possession? Why not, at another time, read the replies to the Question What kind of men are needed in the foreign field?

Again, he might read by your direction, and the consent of the Society, the Extracts showing the state of the mass of the people. Some, I know, might & probably would run away from such instruction, but would not the more judicious & sober numbers remain & hear & be profited? I make the suggestion, - you can act or not as wisdom shall direct. But by all means try to have new letters, & if you fail, let it not be your fault.

With these free suggestions I would leave the subject, & turn to matters of future interest to myself. Allow me to request them, in return for these remarks & admonitions to be faithful to your trust, & diligent in gathering information from the four quarters of the globe, that you will write to me, & that too as speedily as possible. I hope I may hear from you not less than twice or thrice a year. I wish you to inform me of the State of the Sem. Health of its Professors, - number of students — State of the Soc. of Inq. - interest felt in its meetings, — State of your Committee, the number of its members, wh. questions are discussed, - the state of your correspondence, from whom letters have been received, & to whom sent. Do you keep up with your correspondents? Do you write often? Tell me also what is the state of religion among & around you, & the state of Missionary feeling in your Seminary and in others.

When you write ask questions & I will try to answer. You ought to extend your inquiries to South A. Why not? And if you cannot find an open door for missionaries, you can gather up information in store for the day when the barriers shall fall.

I expect to be on my way to Brazil in the course of two weeks from this date, or soon after.

Hoping therefore Brethren, for an interest in your prayers, both for myself & my companion, on our voyage & at our station, I subscribe myself,

In Christian Affection,
Your unworthy Brother
D. M. Johnson C.

Committee on Foreign Missions,
Theological Seminary, Princeton,
N. Jersey.